

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A wheel adapted to be attached to a vehicle for supporting the weight of the vehicle, the wheel comprising:

a substantially circular rim adapted to receive a tire; and

a lateral surface adapted to face outwardly from a vehicle when mounted thereon, at least a portion of the lateral surface being configured to simulate an appearance of an animal covering that has been removed from an animal and placed on the wheel.

2. The wheel of Claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the lateral surface is configured to simulate the appearance of ostrich skin.

3. The wheel of Claim 2 wherein the ostrich-skin simulation surface comprises a plurality of quasi-circular protrusions with bases and pointed or rounded ends, the bases of the protrusions being larger in width than the ends of the protrusions.

4. The wheel of Claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the lateral surface is configured to simulate the appearance of alligator or crocodile skin.

5. The wheel of Claim 4, wherein the alligator or crocodile simulation surface comprises a plurality of cellular shapes.

6. The wheel of Claim 5, wherein a majority of the cellular shapes comprise three-sided or four-sided shapes with substantially non-straight edges.

7. The wheel of Claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the lateral surface is configured to simulate the appearance of zebra hair.

8. The wheel of Claim 7 wherein the zebra-hair simulation surface comprises a plurality of stripe segments with their longitudinal dimensions substantially greater than their transverse dimensions, and their longitudinal axes generally oriented toward the center of the lateral surface of the wheel.

9. The wheel of Claim 8 wherein a plurality of the stripe segments comprise a varying width across their transverse dimensions.

10. The wheel of Claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the lateral surface is configured to simulate the appearance of lizard skin.

11. The wheel of Claim 10 wherein the lizard-skin simulation surface comprises a plurality of amorphous-shaped sections.

12. The wheel of Claim 11 wherein the lizard simulation surface comprises a plurality of bridges between two or more amorphous-shaped sections

13. The wheel of Claim 11 wherein a plurality of the amorphous-shaped sections are oriented so that imaginary lines drawn across their respective maximum widths are generally parallel.

14. The wheel of Claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the lateral surface is configured to simulate the appearance of tiger fur.

15. The wheel of Claim 14 wherein the tiger-fur simulation surface comprises a plurality of stripe segments extending generally perpendicularly to the radius of the wheel.

16. The wheel of Claim 15 wherein a plurality of the stripe segments include at least one open area within each stripe segment.

17. The wheel of Claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the lateral surface is configured to simulate the appearance of cheetah fur.

18. The wheel of Claim 16 wherein the cheetah-fur simulation surface comprises a plurality of amorphous sections, the respective widths of the amorphous sections being comparable in size to the distance between adjacent amorphous sections.

19. The wheel of Claim 18 wherein the surface area of a plurality of amorphous sections is at least three times larger than the surface area of a plurality of other amorphous sections.

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